1672

A SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE

TRUSTEES

OF THE

Briſtol Infirmary,

AT THEIR

ANNIVERSARY MEETING,

IN THE

Pariſh Church of St. JAMES in *BRISTOL*,

SEPTEMBER 10, 1778.

By THOMAS JOHNES,

Chaplain of the ſaid INFIRMARY.

Publiſhed at the Requeſt of the STEWARDS for the Year 1778.

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SEPTEMBER 6, 1778.

BRITISH MUSEUM

By THOMAS JONES,

One of the Trustees.

GAL. vi. 9.

And let us not be weary in well-doing: For in due ſeaſon we ſhall reap, if we faint not.

THOUGH a ſincere Chriſtian never can be weary of acts of beneficence and charity in the general, yet there are particular modes of well-doing, which, however pleaſing in themſelves and beneficial to others, may be attended with ſuch difficulties and diſcouragements in the proceſs, as may check and retard our further advancement in them. There is, beſides, a certain fickleneſs of humour and unſteadineſs of mind, which ſtrengthen theſe difficulties, and add to the embarraſſment. Theſe adhere ſo cloſely to our nature, that, like a falſe bias, they often lead us off from the very point we were at firſt eagerly purſuing.—To counteract theſe impediments, we ſhould often reflect on the pleaſing ſenſations ever attendant on acts of beneficence and charity; we ſhould recall to our memories, the ſatisfaction, we ourſelves have happily experienced, on contributing to the relief of the wants and diſtreſſes of our fellow-creatures, and the many obligations we lie under, from the conſtitution of our nature, and our Chriſtian profeſſion, to promote the felicity of others. This will incite us to a repetition of thoſe actions, ſo pleaſing on reflection; and to overlook and deſpiſe the diſcouragements, that have the leaſt tendency to deprive us of ſo exalted a gratification. If, on due recollection and examination of

 ourſelves,

ourſelves, we are not conſcious of this inward approbation, we muſt aſcribe it to its true cauſe; viz. That the principles, on which we acted, were not ſound, nor our views upright. For when our actions are diſintereſted, and proceed from a real conviction of the excellence of religion and virtue,—when the proſpect of future recompenſe is taken into our view, and hath its proper influence over us, Heart-felt joy and ſatisfaction will ever be the happy fruits and conſequence of them.—Men, indeed, often act from different motives. Vanity, oſtentation, and ambition too often mix with their ſpecious and ſplendid actions. This is ſuch an Alloy, as will embaſe the pureſt gold,—depreciate its value; and in the ſame proportion diminiſh our ſatisfaction, perhaps make it entirely diſappear. We ſhall be neither conſiſtent, nor uniform; but as wavering and inconſtant, as the motives on which we act. We ſhall either ſtop ſhort, or proceed ſo ſlowly, as to become at laſt *weary in well-doing*, and loſe the happy fruits of a generous and laudable perſeverance.

Let us then *not be weary in well-doing: For in due ſeaſon we ſhall reap, if we faint not.*

The Apoſtle here alludes to the employment of the huſbandman, the fruits of whoſe harveſt will be, humanly ſpeaking, proportionate to his induſtry, labour, and perſeverance in the work of cultivation. It is a favourite argument with him, which, both here and elſewhere, he often uſes in his exhortations to the continuing of the practice of Chriſtian duties. *He, which ſoweth ſparingly, ſhall reap alſo ſparingly: And he which ſoweth bountifully, ſhall reap alſo bountifully.*

bountifully.[a] And again, *He that ſoweth to the fleſh, ſhall of the fleſh reap corruption.*[b]—*Well-doing* hath a variety of ſignifications in holy writ. In a general ſenſe, it is uſed for the whole compaſs of Chriſtian duty. Sometimes, it is reſtrained to one particular branch of it; and in this place, ſignifies acts of beneficence and charity. For the preceding words, in the ſixth verſe of this chapter, are, *Let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth, in all good things:* And, in the words following the text, the ſame ſubject is ſtill purſued and recommended,—*As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, eſpecially unto them who are of the houſhold of faith.* Conſequently, the words of the text *(well-doing)* coming between theſe two paſſages, and connecting them together, muſt be conſidered, as inferring the ſame duty; and the expreſſion *(well-doing)* muſt have the ſame import, as—*To communicate in good things*, or *to do good.*

THIS is a duty, then, which hath not only reaſon for its ſupport and encouragement, as it ariſes from the conſideration of the wants of our common nature, and as every exertion of it is attended with ſatisfaction; but it hath, moreover, the expreſs command of GOD, to enforce the practice of it. For the Chriſtian religion is a reaſonable ſervice, and requires nothing of us, but what is agreeable to our beſt judgment: God appeals, as it were, to man's reaſon and underſtanding, for the propriety, the wiſdom, and goodneſs of his commandments. All the motives to *well-doing*, which ariſe from reaſon, and lead us of themſelves to the practice of it, are

 enforced

[a] 2 Cor. ix. 6. [b] Gal. vi. 8.

enforced by the Chriſtian religion. It not only offers theſe to our ſerious conſideration; but it exhibits others of a more powerful and awakening nature, ſuch as cannot fail to impreſs the hearts of ſerious men, and to influence their practice.

THIS ſubject requires neither learning to explain, nor the eloquence of the preacher to ſet it off, nor the force or beauty of words to adorn it. It recommends itſelf to every man's ſerious notice and attention, by *its own nature.*

Many other duties there are, and thoſe of the higheſt importance to man's welfare, which are harſh and unpalatable, which nothing but time and cuſtom can reconcile us to the practice of. The corruptions of the human heart render us ſo averſe from them, that great pains, much trial, and frequent reflection—on the practicability and reaſonableneſs of them, and on the beauty of conqueſt over ourſelves, are required to render them, I will not ſay, *agreeable*, but *eaſy* to us. But beneficence and compaſſion are ſo ſtrongly rooted in our nature, that, they are ſeldom eradicated, till we are by ſome prepoſterous courſe of life—diveſted of humanity. They have ſo ſtrong a foundation in Man's nature, that the purſuit of them is pleaſing; and we find by experience, that the trouble and expence are more than repaid and compenſated by the rational pleaſure flowing from it: Since we may be truly ſaid to gratify and pleaſe ourſelves, in the ſame proportion, as we ſerve others. So juſt is that obſervation of our Saviour, *it is more bleſſed to give, than to receive.*[c]

MAN'S

[c] Acts xx. 35.

MAN's obligation to *this* duty hath been ſo generally acknowledged, and its concomitant pleaſure ſo ſenſibly felt, that all Chriſtians in every ſucceſſive age of the Church, however differing in opinion, and divided among themſelves in other matters, have all agreed in approving of it; and have ſeen the neceſſity, and owned their obligation to the practice of this virtue.

IN the days of the Apoſtles, there was a fund raiſed to relieve the wants, and alleviate the miſeries, of thoſe who ſuffered under a ſtate of perſecution:[d] Though the contributors to this humane deſign knew not how ſoon it might be their *own fate*;—how ſoon they might be called to take up their croſs;—how ſoon they might be called to follow their bleſſed Maſter through ſufferings;—how ſoon they might be reduced to the ſame calamitous condition with thoſe, to whom they contributed, and ſuffer the loſs and confiſcation of all things, that are dear and valuable in this world: *Literally* fulfilling our Lord's command, *by taking no thought for the morrow*.[e]—In the times immediately following, the ſame ſpirit of beneficence and charity prevailed. Love, and compaſſion, and fellowfeeling are the very badge and characteriſtic of thoſe early and beſt times. Even thoſe who were enemies to Chriſtianity, and uſed every human means to check its growth, and prevent its propagation, bore teſtimony to this truth.* Nor did this ardent zeal ceaſe with them; but continued for ages—to invigorate and adorn the practice, and to diſtinguiſh Chriſtians from the reſt of mankind. Their ſingular humanity and charity was the

[d] 2 Cor. ix. 2, &c. [e] Matth. vi. 34. * Pliny L. x. Ep. xcvii.

peculiar honour of the Chriſtian name. Their philanthropy and fellowfeeling beſpoke them, the followers of him, *who went about doing good.*[f] Even in times of ignorance and popiſh ſuperſtition, when Morality was little underſtood, and leſs practiſed, it cannot be denied, that they ſtill retained high notions of this Godlike virtue,—the excellency of Chriſtian charity.—But the worth and dignity of it was greatly debaſed by the ſource from which it was derived: An idle and fanciful notion, that ſuch acts were in themſelves truly meritorious, and would be a ſufficient atonement in the ſight of God for all the impurities of a wicked life. It was a compounding with God, (as they thought) by the liberality of their Alms, for unforſaken ſin; a preſervation from, or deliverance out of, the fancied flames of purgatory.

It was not till the times of our Reformation, that theſe pernicious errours were chaſed away, and charity replaced on its proper footing. But notwithſtanding this, it muſt be confeſſed, that the helpleſs and diſabled poor were ſeverely cruſhed by the downfal of popery, and the diſſolution of Religious houſes: For, by theſe means, they were deprived of their only ſupport. Here they had been cheriſhed,—here they had been bountifully fed;—but now, alas! they had no place to flee unto: *Hungry and thirſty, their ſouls fainted in them.*[g] Hence aroſe the public proviſion which the laws have made for the neceſſitous. But neither was this ſufficient. Theſe Laws are not always impartially and punctually executed. There are many perſons, who want, and earneſtly apply for this relief, who cannot obtain it. Neither are each man's

[f] Acts x. 38. [g] Pſal. cvii. 5.

man's wants ſupplied in that full and ample meaſure, as may ſuperſede all other aſſiſtance. For what is this proviſion at beſt, even where it is fairly and punctually exhibited?—Scanty and penurious,—it extends no further, than the mere neceſſaries of life. There is good room left for the exerciſe of private donation, to make life more eaſy and comfortable, eſpecially to thoſe, whoſe poverty and diſorders are their misfortune, and not their fault: Owing perhaps to caſualties, which could be neither foreſeen nor avoided; and whoſe induſtry and merit might entitle them to higher degrees of conſolation. In ſome meaſure too, the burden of theſe very laws muſt fall on many honeſt and induſtrious perſons, who are perhaps themſelves but one remove above thoſe who receive alms. And, beſides, where the true ſpirit of charity invigorates our endeavours, and is joined with fortune and ability, it will never content itſelf with forced contributions. Something, indeed, muſt and ought to be left to the generoſity and beneficence of thoſe who abound, that they may follow the direction of the Apoſtle, *by being rich in good works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate; and lay up for themſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.*[h]

Now ſuch voluntary benefactions muſt be, either ſuch, as a man diſtributes individually to any objects which he thinks worthy of his regard; or ſuch, as (being of a public and extenſive nature) require the concurrence and joint contributions of many, in order to carry on a more noble and charitable deſign, by their joint counſels and endeavours, and with

[h] 1 Tim. vi. 18, 19.

a common purſe. There cannot be the leaſt pretence, for thinking theſe different ways of doing good, inconſiſtent with each other. They each of them promote the glory of God, and the good of mankind. Perſons of affluence ſhould, undoubtedly, exert and indulge their generous ſpirit in both. However, in moſt caſes, the latter is certainly to be preferred. In which way too, there is a variety of methods of doing good, and all ſubſervient to the ſame end; that men might be left to follow their own judgment, and, contribute to the ſupport of one or more of them, in proportion to the extent of their benevolence, and the fortune wherewith God hath bleſſed them.

By this, impoſitions are better guarded againſt; and, more diffuſive and more certain benefit is derived to the ſick and needy, by the commodiouſneſs of the apartments, a preſcribed regimen of diet and phyſic, and by the ſkill of able Phyſicians and Surgeons. The good a perſon of ſmall fortune can do by private donations, will be comparatively—inconſiderable; whereas by throwing, what he can conveniently ſpare, (and few are there, who cannot ſpare ſomething) into a common fund, he has the pleaſure of contributing to the relief and refreſhment of many. We need not go far for inſtances, to prove the truth of theſe obſervations. We are here aſſembled, publicly to countenance a ſcheme of bounty, which proves it in the moſt ſatisfactory manner. A ſcheme which, in the compaſs of forty years from its firſt inſtitution, hath nobly ſhewn the power of Chriſtian love, and been attended with a viſible and extraordinary ſucceſs. Thouſands, who were ready to periſh, have been indebted to it,

it, for their perfect reſtoration to health and ſtrength. A ſcheme—by which great numbers of hearts, almoſt broken with care and anguiſh, and chilled with deſpair, have had all their fears happily removed, and have been taught to ſing for joy, and bleſs their benefactors. A ſcheme, which promiſes ſtill greater advantages to our poſterity; unleſs we niggardly withdraw our hands, and cruelly neglect to cultivate or improve ſo beneficial an inſtitution.

SURELY, if ever there can be a deſign of *well-doing* truly unexceptionable and laudable, it is this before us. What then ſhould cauſe us ever to be weary of it?—There can be no poſſible objection of any force againſt it in general; and, I verily believe, there is none of any conſequence againſt the management of it. Yet, we muſt remember, that men are apt to grow cool, remiſs, and indifferent to the beſt undertakings; even to thoſe which they once encouraged. I hope you will not think it either improper or impertinent, that I ſhould caution you againſt ſuch miſtakes, as *may* tempt you to grow remiſs in your endeavours.

AVARICE, by degrees, may ſteal in upon, and harden your hearts; and make you deaf to the cries of want and miſery. Luxury, vain expenſes, and a love of pleaſure, may diſſipate your thoughts, make you overlook the miſeries of others, and idly and wantonly conſume that ſubſtance, which you might, with more honour and ſatisfaction, employ in acts of generoſity and pity. Between theſe two, *avarice* and *luxury*, there is this difference; where avarice prevails, all generous ſentiments, and the fineſt feelings of human nature

become totally extinct; where luxury is the predominant paſſion, charity and compaſſion may *ſtill live* in ſome *ſmall degree:* Yet, as they cannot be gratified, but at the expenſe of thoſe coſtly elegancies, which cuſtom or faſhion have rendered almoſt neceſſary; the luxurious man is too apt to forget the former, that he may continue to indulge himſelf in the latter. You ſee, then, the great reaſon there is to guard our hearts againſt the admiſſion of ſuch gueſts, ſo very deſtructive to every ſoft and benevolent affection. Again, ſome new faſhionable ſcheme may be ſet on foot; and ſupplant and ſuperſede the old ones, which time and ſucceſs have approved. An obſtinate and violent attachment to ſome recommendations and meaſures of our own, is apt to make us angry, if theſe ſhould not ſucceed and take place. Laſtly, prejudices may be taken up againſt thoſe, who have the ſuperintendence and conduct of the charity, on private and perſonal accounts; nay, what is moſt to be lamented,—on party conſiderations: For, however foreign theſe are, and ſurely nothing can be more ſo, ſuch an inimical ſpirit is ſometimes known to interfere with the deſigns even of charity and compaſſion. So many things are there, which *can* make us *weary in well-doing*. Suffer me, then, earneſtly to warn you againſt giving way, to the injurious practices and opinions which I have mentioned.

The ſucceſs of any foundation, like this before us, muſt depend on its ſupporters being equally cautious, neither to give, nor to take offence, without abſolute neceſſity.——In order to be *ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, and always abounding in this work of the Lord,*[1] it will be requiſite to ſet out on the beſt motives;

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 58.

motives; to let the love of God and man prevail in our hearts, and to keep in memory how truly valuable ſuch acts of mercy are, how highly acceptable in the ſight of God, and how ſecure we are of receiving from Him an everlaſting reward. This will not only preſerve us from ſinking under any diſcouragements we may meet with; but it will quicken our diligence and zeal, and make us humbly aſpire to imitate, in ſome meaſure, that high and lofty character, which the Prophet Iſaiah gives of *the everlaſting God, the* LORD, *the creator of the ends of the earth,* that He *fainteth not, neither is weary.*[k] And again, in the words of other parts of ſacred ſcripture, that *his goodneſs endureth continually,*[l] and *his compaſſions fail not.*[m]

Wherever ſuch religious inducements prevail, (and they ought to prevail over all who call themſelves reaſonable creatures) they muſt always be invariably the ſame. No time, no circumſtance can alter their nature; but our paſſions and affections may weaken their force. By due attention to ſuch motives, then, our duty will become more and more our delight; and, the moſt pleaſing of all reflections and hopes will daily increaſe upon us, in proportion to our labours and endeavours. An attentive conſideration (I ſay) of ſuch motives will have a powerful effect; they will by degrees arrive at fulneſs of ſtrength and efficacy; illuminate the dark corners of our hearts; and, make almoſt a miraculous impreſſion on them, in favour of a duty ſo pleaſing to GOD, and beneficial to mankind.

[k] Iſai. xl. 28. [l] Pſa. lii. 1. [m] Lam. iii. 22.

Great therefore is the encouragement, which you have to proceed in the ſupport and care of this Infirmary. And, no leſs encouragement have others, according to their ſeveral fortunes and capacities, to lend their helping hands, and advance the charity.

We live in a City of great Trade and Opulence, full of people, by reaſon of the multitude of hands required to carry on its extenſive Commerce and Manufactures. Amongſt ſuch numbers of people there muſt be many poor; and, in conſequence of ſuch numbers, there muſt be many ſick. Theſe complicated caſes of ſickneſs and poverty form a moſt grievous diſtreſs. Theſe evils much heighten and aggravate each other. Not only individuals, but families, yea, and public ſocieties muſt be nearly affected by them. There cannot therefore be a more natural, or a juſter call for our compaſſion and mercy: And whoever can withhold his hand, when applied to at ſuch a ſeaſon, muſt be void of every tender feeling; as well as forgetful that he himſelf is—*compaſſed with infirmities*,[n] and continually liable to a ſad variety of diſtempers and caſualties. Would we but make the unhappy caſe our own, and once ſuppoſe ourſelves to be the perſons thus afflicted; then, what kind offices ſhould we naturally expect from others, and wiſh their hearts to be as good, as their abilities were great? And, how extremely barbarous and cruel ſhould we think *them*, if they were to leave us ſo abſolutely helpleſs, ſo miſerably deſtitute of all relief and ſupport, to a certain—perhaps a lingering death, from exceſſive agony and torment?——This muſt be very much the

[n] Heb. v. 2.

the condition of the neceſſitous in ſuch melancholy circumſtances. It is a juſt repreſentation of the caſe, and a genuine picture of ourſelves. *We are* thus barbarous and brutiſh, if we do not endeavour to alleviate the pains of others; if, we paſs *by on the other ſide*,° regardleſs of their tears and unaffected with their ſorrows.*

INDEED, in the days of health and ſtrength, it is highly fitting and proper, that the accommodations and conveniencies of life, ſhould be proportionate to the *different* ranks and fortunes of men; and that the poor ſhould reſt ſatisfied and contented with ſuch, as are within their reach, and ſuited to the claſs they hold in the community. But, when they are thrown on a bed of ſickneſs, theſe diſtinctions of fortune ſhould be overlooked, the *natural equality* between creatures of the ſame ſpecies ſhould be conſidered:

° Luke x. 32.

* The miſery of ſuch poor people, and their title to the relief of this Infirmary, is very elegantly expreſſed, by a late eminent Prelate. "For if we call "to mind, how much ſome trades and employments impair and exhauſt mens "ſtrength, how ſome others neceſſarily produce diſorders and diſtempers, as it were "certain conſequences and effects of the occupations men follow; if you reflect upon "the dangerous tools ſome men work with, the great weights others lift, the heavy "burthens others bear; if you conſider the heat and cold of different climates, the "hazard of climbing maſts, and ſpreading and working ſails in ſtormy and tem-"peſtuous weather, the perpetual fatigue of a ſea-faring life, the watching of the "nights, and the labour of the days; if you are ſenſible that all theſe various "employs, ſo full of toil and danger, muſt be undergone to carry on the trade, to "ſupport the wealth of this place, you muſt be convinced, that the deſign of the "*Infirmary*, is an uſeful and charitable deſign, and deſerves the approbation, de-"mands the encouragement of this *great trading city*."—See the Biſhop of DERRY's ſermon, before the Contributors to the *Briſtol Infirmary*, in the year 1738, page 12th.

And the ſenſe of ſuffering, which cannot but be common to the whole human race, ſhould remind us of our duty, and move us to do every thing we can, to ſoften the rigours of poverty, and to extend to them all comfort and aſſiſtance. And *this*—that the Poor man, being recovered as ſoon as poſſible, may return again to the duties of his ſtation, again fill up honeſtly that part and ſphere of life, which is aſſigned him; and with a proper advantage to himſelf, but a much greater to the community at large,* contribute to the ſupport, profit, and pleaſure of the more opulent part of the world.

Besides what is ſuffered in acute diſeaſes, there are ſeveral pains, very ſevere in themſelves, and often very fatal in their conſequences, from which the poor are not exempt; and, when they are afflicted with them, it is eaſy to ſuppoſe, that, *their* ſufferings muſt be more grievous, from the want of that neceſſary convenience and aſſiſtance, which the wealthy can command. Should it be thought, that they are leſs expoſed to ſuch calamities, being inured to labour, and more removed out of the way of luxury, intemperance, and diſſolute living, which are uſually the cauſes of theſe torments; the anſwer is eaſy,—there is no arguing againſt fact and experience. In many caſes, we cannot account for the ſudden attacks

* "To the Poor it is that we are immediately, and almoſt ſolely, indebted for every "advantage of eaſe and pleaſure, which improved and refined ſociety affords; (ad-"vantages which we are but too apt to eſteem the principal bleſſings of ſociety) "it being by their inceſſant toil, that the elegances of polite and faſhionable life are "procured for us. While all the reward *they* have, for becoming benefactors to the "great and wealthy, is but the hard and ſcanty ſuſtenance of a miſerable Being."—— Biſhop Warburton. Vol. 1ſt. Serm. 4. p. 69.

attacks of pain; neither do they always ariſe from any prior ill conduct. Indeed, it is true and much to be lamented, that ſome means of intemperance are too much within the reach of all perſons; and their temptations too great to the exceſſive uſe of thoſe liquors, which, being more unwholeſome, inflaming, and intoxicating than any others; render the *loweſt people* peculiarly liable to contract debility and diſorders,—and bring violent tortures upon themſelves.

But, whilſt we are anſwering one objection, it may be neceſſary to obviate another, which ſeems to ariſe from this anſwer. Such poor may be thought, on this account, unworthy objects of our care and pity. Allow that they are ſo; ſtill they ought not, when labouring under ſuch dreadful diſtreſſes, to be excluded from our compaſſion. Indeed, when people are in perfect health, it may be a means of reclaiming them, to ſuffer them to feel, in ſome meaſure, the conſequences of their wickedneſs.—But, it would be confining Chriſtian charity within very narrow limits, and really deſtroying one great part of it, were we to be nicely ſcrupulous about the merits of the ſufferers, and not to extend our aid to thoſe, who are really diſeaſed. No,—we ſhould be ready to make ſome favourable and merciful allowances for others, which, more or leſs, we all want ourſelves. We ſhould rather imitate the goodneſs of God, who dealeth not *with Us according to our iniquities*:[p] Who *maketh his ſun to riſe on the evil and on the good, and ſendeth rain on the juſt and on the unjuſt*:[q] And ſcattereth the bleſſings of life in great abundance, with a moſt gracious and generous hand.

[p] Pſa. ciii. 10. [q] Matth. v. 45.

HOWEVER, it would be very unjuſt to ſuppoſe, that all, who are obliged to apply for your aſſiſtance, have been inſtrumental in acquiring their own diſorders. Undoubtedly, many of theſe muſt be charitably ſuppoſed to have met with ſuch, from the hand of God, without any fault of their own. And this may be deſigned, not only to try *their* faith and patience, but to exerciſe *our* bounty and compaſſion, and finally to increaſe the happineſs of both us and them.

Of this nature, in general, are the many terrible accidents and caſualties, which are ſent in and received without any other recommendation. It would be moſt injurious to the honour and uſefulneſs of the Infirmary, to paſs theſe over in ſilence. Were there no other benefit ariſing from it, theſe alone would be ſufficient to entitle it to applauſe and encouragement. *Theſe* are calamities, in themſelves unforeſeen and inevitable, which, the induſtrious and laborious frequently meet with, in the very midſt of their employment and work; and who, without immediate and ſkilful help, would be incapacitated for any further labour, or, at beſt, would drag about an uſeleſs body, a burden to themſelves and a terrour to others: And muſt terminate their days in the *utmoſt miſery*.

HELP they fail not to find here. To theſe objects, your doors are open day and night. Every convenience, every comfort, every office of tenderneſs, all the arts of phyſic and ſurgery, not one of which could they have in the ſame degree, or with the ſame proſpect of ſucceſs, at home, are here uſed and applied, to ſupport their ſpirits, to aſſuage their

their pains, to bind up and heal their broken limbs, and to reſtore them, if poſſible, and as ſpeedily as poſſible, to their friends, their families, and the public. Theſe, therefore, and many other reaſons, which there is not now time to enumerate, ſhould move us to contribute willingly and largely, as *God loveth a cheerful giver*,[1] to ſo well deſigned and uſeful a charity.

I ſhall not deſcend to the minuter articles of this uſeful Charity. Theſe, with the methods by which it is conducted, may be learned by any one from the accounts, which are annually laid before the public. In theſe may be alſo found the growing ſucceſs which has hitherto attended it, and which of itſelf is a ſufficient juſtification of the management.

I would wiſh, however, to lay before you the following ſummary, and general ſtate of the proceedings for the laſt year. The number of beds for Patients is a hundred and thirty two. In theſe, eleven hundred and ſeventy five In-Patients have received their cure. Beſides them, within the ſame compaſs of time, no leſs than two thouſand three hundred and thirty four Out-Patients have been admitted, above two thouſand two hundred and forty of whom are known to have been cured and relieved: Two hundred and forty three were Caſualties, ſent hither without recommendation, and immediately admitted. What ſatisfaction muſt every good heart receive from this review?—We muſt imagine all the objects, when they came hither for aſſiſtance,

[1] 2 Cor. ix. 7.

to be as weak—helpleſs—and diſtreſſed as poſſible.—Let us view them when diſmiſſed. What a happy alteration have they here found? With what new life—and ſpirits—and joy do they now appear?—Let our thoughts follow them home; and we may well imagine them bleſſing GOD, praying for their Benefactors, and engaging again in the labours and duties of life with zeal and vigour. And who, that contributes to this laudable inſtitution, but muſt partake in *their* comforts and pleaſures?

THEY, who viſit the Houſe, cannot but ſee, in every perſon here recovered, a new reaſon for their perſeverance; and, muſt in part feel the preſent reward of their bounty, in the view of the excellent conſequences which thus immediately attend it. In one reſpect, indeed, this their rejoicing, at preſent, ſuffers an abatement; and the only imperfection attending the charity, is, that the Buildings are too ſcanty for the reception of the *numbers* of thoſe who want and crave admiſſion. They muſt, then, feel the diſtreſs of being obliged to reject or poſtpone many caſes of calamity, for want of room. During the courſe of the laſt year, no leſs than two hundred and ninety two perſons were, on that account, refuſed admittance.* The accumulated diſtreſs of *theſe*

* It appears from the annual accounts, that there has not been leſs than 300 perſons, each year upon an average for theſe laſt 17 years, refuſed admittance for want of room; and, in the years 1767 and 1768, above 1300 were rejected. The reaſon of which was, that when the Houſe was moſt crowded with Patients, the greateſt number then applied for admiſſion. From which an obſervation may be made, That at all times the Houſe is inſufficient for thoſe who offer, and that on any emergency very few, in proportion to the ſick, can be relieved.

theſe poor people would move the moſt obdurate heart, and melt it into pity.

PICTURE to yourſelves,—a poor man rendered incapable of ſupporting his wife and helpleſs family, from a diſorder which it *is* yet in the power of medicine to remove. To his poverty and racking pains, add his anxiety to procure a recommendation to the Infirmary. Let us ſuppoſe him to have obtained the comfortable paſſport, then, attended by the dear partner of his woe, he at length, after much fatigue, reaches this Aſylum. The ſight of which raiſes his drooping ſpirits; and, deluſive Hope tells him, he ſhall here ſpeedily meet with redreſs, and get rid of his complaints. But alas! he is ſoon informed—he cannot be admitted, *for want of room.*—Oh! could you now but have an idea of his feelings: All hopes of recovery are loſt in a moment:—They *both* reſt their weary limbs for a while, and, participating in each other's woe, bewail, in all the bitterneſs of anguiſh, their hard and miſerable lot.

Were we to trace them back to their dwelling, we ſhould there behold a ſcene of woe—beyond deſcription.

MANY inſtances of a ſimilar nature might be produced. Would to God theſe diſtreſſing ſcenes could move the hearts of the ſupporters of this Charity, to make the preſent ſcheme of compaſſion more extenſively beneficial! That they would ſet on foot a ſeparate ſubſcription, or contrive ſome other means, in order to build a ſtrong and plain, but a much

larger and more *convenient**—Houſe, for the reception of patients.—I truſt this may be effected.†

But whilſt I thus endeavour *to provoke you unto love and good works,*' I muſt not forget that debt of gratitude which is due to thoſe, to whom this laudable deſign owes its riſe, its eſtabliſhment, its enlargement, and its ſubſequent ſucceſs.

Let us, in the firſt place, commemorate our generous Founder, Mr. ELBRIDGE, who, for the relief and preſervation of the diſeaſed poor, cheerfully undertook the care of this Building, and effected it entirely at his own expenſe.

And,

* Heb. x. 24.

* A Houſe with more ſpacious and lofty apartments, and of a form better expoſed to the air, is certainly much to be deſired; were it but to accommodate the ſame number of Patients which occupy the preſent: That by theſe means perſons may have that putridity deſtroyed, which they had contracted in their own cloſe and inconvenient dwellings. This is *now* done, in ſome meaſure, though by no means adequate to the end propoſed. For it ſometimes happens, that a ſlow depreſſing fever, the offspring of putridity, not ſufficiently corrected by the air, creeps over the patients other complaints, and becomes the principal diſorder.

† The Benefactions for the laſt ſeven years have, upon an average, amounted to upwards of 1000l. yearly: Of which about 500l. have been applied towards defraying the expenſes of the Houſe. So that there has been an annual ſaving of near 600l. If the enſuing years ſhould prove equally favourable, ſuch an annual ſum, added to ſome late very generous Legacies, will, it is apprehended, anſwer the purpoſes mentioned above, without any extraordinary contribution from the ſubſcribers.

And, afterwards, very handſomely endowed it.*—While he lived—*the eye that ſaw him bleſſed him, and the ear that heard him rejoiced:*[t] Owing to his bounty *the lame walked, and the ſick were healed.* His good deeds died not with him,—his works ſhall follow him beyond the grave,—and, by this Inſtitution which he eſtabliſhed, he ſhall for ever live in his Charities, and his name ſhall be bleſſed to future generations.

LET us, in the next place, gratefully remember Dr. BONYTHON, many years a Phyſician to this Infirmary. The growth and improvement of this Charity have been greatly owing to his care and conduct. He was zealous and indefatigable in promoting its ſucceſs; and careful in directing every occurrence to its advantage. No calamitous objects preſented themſelves with whom he did not, in a truly affectionate manner, and with an unfeigned Chriſtian concern, moſt tenderly ſympathize. In conſequence of which, he became active in affording them his generous and kind aſſiſtance. And though now, alas! He hath long quitted this mortal life; yet I preſume that the remembrance of him and his deeds is not confined to time, whoſe boundaries are too narrow for his Chriſtian deſerts, that his name will be enrolled in the Regiſter of Heaven, and his virtue be conſecrated by GOD himſelf to an Eternal duration.

[t] Job xxix. 11.

* The preſent Houſe was originally fitted up by John Elbridge, Eſq; at his ſole expenſe, and was opened in 1737, and then contained 34 beds. The next year he fitted up 12 beds more. The whole coſt him at leaſt 1500l. Beſides, he left by Will 5000l. to this Charity.

NOR muſt our late and generous Benefactreſs, Mrs. PELOQUIN, be paſſed over in ſilence, who (beſides many other acts of generoſity and goodneſs continually practiſed in her life time) diſcovered her diſcretion, as well as liberality, in leaving a very ample annual Benefaction to the *induſtrious* poor of this City.* Whilſt ſhe lived,—ſhe cheriſhed the ſons of misfortune with peculiar care and tenderneſs; and, at her death, extended her bounty to *this Charity* † far beyond all her predeceſſors ‡—our Founder alone excepted.

WERE I but barely to name all the bounties of others, who have liberally contributed towards the ſupport of this Inſtitution; I ſhould treſpaſs too much upon your time and patience. Suffice it therefore, in the general, to offer up our hearty acknowledgments to Almighty God, for having raiſed up ſo many worthy and able perſons to forward theſe good works; and for ſending down his bleſſing upon their endeavours.

LET us humbly beg of God, that not one of the *leaſt* of our benefactors may fail of being amply rewarded both here and hereafter; and that it would pleaſe Him to touch the hearts of us *all* ſo efficaciouſly, that our zeal for theſe works of

* Mrs. PELOQUIN left by Will the Intereſt of 18,700l. to be diſtributed annually among poor Citizens not receiving alms.

† She alſo left 5000 l. to the *Briſtol Infirmary*.

‡ Raro forſitan, magniſque ætatum intervallis invenitur. neque enim magna, et excedentia ſolitum ac Vulgarem modum, crebro gignuntur. Seneca de conſtant. Sap. Cap. vii.

of goodneſs and piety, may be proportionate to the powers and abilities which he hath ſeverally imparted to us: That thus—*uſing this world as not abuſing it*,[u] and *making to ourſelves friends of the mammon of unrighteouſneſs*,[w] when *the faſhion of this world ſhall paſs away*, and this tranſitory life be exchanged for another; we may be *received into thoſe everlaſting habitations*, where diſtreſs and poverty have no place, where grief and ſorrow have no admittance, where almſgiving will for ever ceaſe, and where Charity will be completely rewarded with peace—and joy—and eternal felicity.

[u] 1 Cor. vii. 31. [w] Luke xvi. 9.

FINIS.

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FINIS.